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ABSTRACT

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assists clients to develop an understanding of their four functions (sensing, intuition, thinking, feeling), and their four attitudes (extraversion, introversion, judgment, and perception). It also provides information about each client's dominant, auxiliary, tertiary, and inferior functions, and the time frame within which each will develop. For the past 5 years, counselors at Seminole Community College have attempted to determine if there is a relationship between client type and the following three variables: (1) presenting problems; (2) interventions the client requested; and (3) interventions the client needed. Data were collected from students in a variety of academic and counseling groups. Each type appeared to have some unique wellness issues, distinct preferences for the issues they wanted, and clear-cut counseling needs. Many clients, particularly those at mid-life, felt uncomfortable because they were doing things out of character. This appeared to be related to type, not to the dominant or the auxiliary functions, but to the inferior function. Counselors are in the process of developing ways to assist clients to recognize and develop the inferior function. In general, two rules seem to apply when dealing with the inferior: do not confront it, and help clients develop it during leisure hours rather than during critical work or home time. The major wellness issues, 16 types and suggested interventions, as well as inferior function and characteristics are listed. (LLL)

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THE MBTI AS A PREDICTOR OF WELLNESS ISSUES:THEIRS AND OURS

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THE MBTI: A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Developed by Isabel Briggs Myers and based on Carl Jung's theory of psychological type, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assists clients to develop an understanding of their four basic functions (sensing, intuition, thinking, feeling) and their four attitudes (extraversion, introversion, judgement and perception). It also provides information about each client's dominant, auxiliary, tertiary and inferior functions--and the timeframe within which each will develop. Research indicates that basic knowledge of type assists clients to:

1. increase their understanding of themselves and others, providing a common language and a roadmap to the developmental process.

2. make sense out of the world, providing hypotheses about why people behave in a certain way.

3. create neutral arenas in which critical issues can be discussed without the stigma of "I am right, and you are wrong."

4. focus their efforts to grow, since the basic challenge is to develop all the functions, not just those that come naturally.

5. approach life in a positive way, becoming the "best" of their type and viewing the actions of others through the prism of type theory.

However, type does not explain everything: acculturation, ethnicity, religion, sex, socio-economic status, and many other variables shape the way each type develops. And type does not excuse anything: knowledge of type provides clients with guides to their developmental needs, not convenient excuses for unacceptable or unproductive behavior.

TYPE AND WELLNESS

Each type has its gifts--and its challenges! Extraverts are accomplished communicators who need to develop their ability to listen, while Introverts are natural listeners who need to learn how to share half-formed ideas. Sensing clients have a wonderful ability to live in the present and deal with details, but they need to learn to see the big picture and anticipate the long-term consequences of their actions. Intuitives, on the other hand, enjoy a clear view of the future and naturally see the big picture, but they need to learn to live in the present and pay attention to details. Clients who prefer the thinking function reach conclusions on the basis of impersonal logic and analysis, while clients who prefer the feeling function reach conclusions on the basis of person-centered value systems. Thinking types need to add feelings to their decision-making equations; feeling types need to learn to deal with disharmony and recognize their own needs. Clients who prefer the judging function value organization and quick

decisions, but need to learn how to delay closure and develop systems to evaluate the effectiveness of their decisions. Clients who prefer the perceiving function value flexibility and change, but need to learn how to make more timely decisions and deal with structure.

For the past five years, counselors at Seminole Community College have attempted to determine if there is a relationship between client type and the following three variables: presenting problems, interventions the client requested and interventions the client needed. As Attachment A indicates, each type appears to have some unique wellness issues, distinct preferences for the interventions they want (W), and fairly clear-cut counseling needs (N). Data were collected from students in a variety of academic classes and counseling groups. Since most of the information was anecdotal, firm research conclusions cannot be drawn; however, there appears to be strong support for a hypothesis that each type has distinct counseling needs and will respond to different counseling interventions.

TYPE AND THE MID-LIFE TRANSITION

While collecting data on the relationship of type to wellness, counselors noticed that many clients, particularly those at mid-life, felt uncomfortable because they were "doing things totally out of character". Family members often reported that these clients were acting like strangers or doing something "off the wall" when compared to their previous behaviors. Once again, anecdotal data indicated that the "something different" was related to type: not to the dominant or the auxiliary functions, but to the illusive inferior function.

According to Jungian theory, the development of the inferior function is critical to the individuation process. As the persona breaks up in mid-life, the inferior function assists the client to identify unconscious material and incorporate it into the conscious (dominant) in order to create a stronger, more integrated self. In many respects, the inferior function manages the client's mid-life crisis, and counselors must assist clients to manage their inferior function-- not an easy task, since the inferior function emerges in a strong, childlike, almost infantile way!

Attachment B identifies the inferior function for each type and the characteristics of the inferior. Counselors are in the process of developing ways to assist clients to recognize and develop the inferior function. In general, two rules seem to apply when dealing with the inferior: (1) do not confront it, and (2) help clients develop it during leisure hours, not during critical work or home time.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE MBTI, JUNGIAN THEORY AND THE INFERIOR FUNCTION

June Singer's Boundaries of the Soul, Frieda Fordham's Introduction to Jung's Psychology and Murray Stein's Jungian Analysis provide excellent reviews of Jung and his theories. Isabel Briggs-Myers' Gifts Differing is a positive introduction to the concept of type as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Marie-Louise von Franz has an excellent article entitled "The Inferior Function" in Jung's Typology, while Daryl Sharp discusses the inferior function in his Personality Types.

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THE SIXTEEN TYPES: MAJOR WELLNESS ISSUES/ SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS

TYPE	WELLNESS ISSUES	WHAT THEY WANT/NEED FROM COUNSELORS
Extraverted Thinking (ESTJ, ENTJ)	Creating relationships that allow them to maintain their independence	Short-term interventions that solve the problem quickly (W)
	Selecting leisure activities because they are enjoyable not because they serve a purpose	Cerebral, data-based analyses and solutions (W)
	Dealing with rejection rather than covering it up	Learn how to include others' feelings in the decision-making equation (N)
	Seeing the need for change	Sharpen evaluation procedures to determine if decisions are effective (N)
	Exploding emotionally	
	Ignoring feelings (theirs and others)	Sharpen listening skills (N)
	Pushing themselves to succeed/Not accepting limits	
Extraverted Feeling (ESFJ,ENFJ)	Dealing constructively with disharmony/Managing conflict	Reaffirmation that they are O.K. (W)
	Differentiating between business relationships and friendships	Create an internal "yardstick" that they can use to assess external input (N)
	Recognizing and meeting their own needs	Build a more positive self concept (N)
	Selecting leisure activities that will renew them rather than organizing leisure activities for others	Sharpen listening skills (N)

	Remaining in a relationship too long.	
	Viewing themselves as failures when a relationship ends	
Extraverted Sensing (ESTP,ESFP)	Dealing with the daily routine of relationships	Insight into the immediate consequences of an action (W)
	Seeing beyond the "quick fix" to long-term solutions	Anticipate the long range consequences of a decision (N)
	Coming across as too blunt (ESTP)	Ability to set and achieve long and short-term goals. (N)
	Overwhelming others with their high energy and "let's fly by the seat of our pants" approach to life	Sharpen listening skills (N)
	Being caught up in their emotions when dealing with a crisis involving disharmony (ESFP)	
	Avoiding interpersonal risks because they fear rejection	
Extraverted Intuition (ENTP,ENFP)	Dealing with rules/ standard operating procedures	Calm their fears (NF) and solve their problems (NT) (W)
	Planning for the future	Validate their view of the future (W)
	Maintaining independence in relationships	Develop listening skills (N)
	Dealing with "dullness"	Develop decision-making skills (N)
	Validating their inspiration in the real world	

	Taking on too many projects at once/ overextending themselves	
	Reaching information overload (ENFP)	
Introverted Thinking (INTP,ISTP)	Understanding the need for "rules" and structure	Solve a problem (W)
	Dealing with people perceived as incompetent or inconsistent	Help "other people" become more logical (W)
	Coping with the "illogical" thinking of others	Show feelings through words, not just actions (N)
	Getting enough "quality time" with themselves	Share ideas as they are "in process"
	Hurting peoples' feelings, particularly in romantic relationships	Interact emotionally with people (N)
	Being viewed by others as negative	
	Understanding emotional outbursts (theirs and others)	
Introverted Feeling (INFP,ISFP)	Neglecting their own needs	Understand the world and its people (W)
	Dealing constructively with conflict	Develop assertiveness skills (N)
	Critizing themselves too much	Create an internal yardstick to check the validity of their feelings (N)
	Finishing what they start (NP)	Share feelings that are "in process" (N)

	Dealing with betrayal and hurt (integrity issues)	
	Finding time alone to recharge their batteries	
	Sharing their feelings with others	
	Being viewed by others as "out to lunch" (NP)	
Introverted Sensing (ISTJ,ISFJ)	Feeling isolated from family, friends or co-workers	Solve a specific problem in a logical way as quickly as possible (W)
	Remaining too long in a relationship	Anticipate the long range consequences of an act or decision (N)
	Receiving feedback from others that they are rigid and inflexible	Concentrate on what works rather than what does not work (N)
		Examine the "shoulds" in their life (N)
	Feeling unappreciated (SFJ)	Brainstorm <u>all</u> the alternatives and consequences (N)
Introverted Intuition (INFJ,INTJ)	Dealing with a relationship that is not ideal <u>by their definition</u>	Reassurance that they are OK (NF) and not going crazy (NT) (W)
	Dealing with control issues	An introduction to reality (N)
	Feeling or thinking that they are alienated from "significant others"	Objectivity about themselves (N)
	Controlling the N while dealing with unconscious material	Clarify and share their definitions with others (N)

TYPE AND THE MID-LIFE TRANSITION: "REVENGE" OF THE INFERIOR FUNCTION

TYPE	INFERIOR FUNCTION	CHARACTERISTICS
Extraverted Thinking (ESTJ,ENTJ)	Introverted Feeling	Extremely sensitive Feelings of Worthlessness Withdrawal From Others Feelings internalized in a confusing way
Extraverted Feeling (ESFJ,ENFJ)	Introverted Thinking	Extreme lack of confidence in ability to analyze data and draw valid conclusions Questions competence, ability to function
Extraverted Sensing (ESTP,ESFP)	Introverted Intuition	Lots of "bad vibes", premonitions of personal disaster Tendency to "see" only the "dark side" of the future
Extraverted Intuition (ENFP,ENTP)	Introverted Sensing	Obsessed with details Compulsive with inanimate objects Pay excessive attention to their bodies
Introverted Thinking (INTP,ISTP)	Extraverted Feeling	Feelings of not being appreciated Anxiety over not being liked Create lots of new relationships Feelings externalized in a noisy, confusing way

Introverted Feeling (INFP,ISFP)	Extraverted Thinking	Facts become the "master" Obsessed with being right Thinking becomes tyrannical
Introverted Sensing (ISTJ,ISFJ)	Extraverted Intuition	Create reality that is not there "Sees" plots in day-to-day activities
Introverted Intuition (INFJ,INTJ)	Extraverted Sensing	Examine one fact, then draw an exaggerated, incorrect conclusion Share the incorrect conclusion with the world